

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
TRSE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04 AID-05 /084 W  
-----113550 040659Z /10

R 031700Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7382  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USNMR SHAPE BEL  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 NICOSIA 0594

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC  
USCINCEUR FOR POLAD  
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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, CY  
SUBJECT: DENKTASH AND HIS OPPOSITION

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH TURKISH CYPRIOT POLITICAL  
LIFE IS ACTIVE, PARTISAN EXCHANGES HAVE LITTLE  
IMMEDIATE SIGNIFICANCE. THE RULING NATIONAL UNITY PARTY  
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IS DIVIDED, BUT OPPOSITION IS MORE SO. DENKTASH FACES  
SOME CONSTRAINTS, MORE IN DOMESTIC HAN INTERCOMMUNAL  
AFFAIRS. GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN POWER  
FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. AS TURKISH CYPRIOTS ENJOY RELEASE FROM A DECADE  
OF LIMITATIONS ON PUBLIC INTERNAL DISPUTE REQUIRED

DURING THEIR PERIOD OF ENCLAVEMENT, THEY ARE PURSUING NEW FOUND RIGHT TO PUBLIC DEBATE WITH EXUBERANCE. THIS MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A VITAL, FUNCTIONING OPPOSITION WITH A REAL POTENTIAL FOR TAKING POWER. YET THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS ESSENTIALLY RESULTED IN THE CONFIRMATION IN POWER OF A LOOSE OLIGARCHY OF INFLUENTIAL FAMILIES WHO SUPPORT MR. DENKTASH FACED BY ONLY A SMALL, BUT VOCAL OPPOSITION.

2. CURRENT PARLIAMENTARY LINE-UP IS AS FOLLOWS

(PARENTHESES GIVE ENGLISH ABBREVIATION, TURKISH ABBREVIATION AND NAMES OF PARTY CHAIRMEN):

NATIONAL UNITY PARTY (NUP) (UBP) (NEJAT KONUK) - 28  
COMMUNAL LIBERATION PARTY (CLP) (TKP) (ALPAY DURDURAN)

- 8

REPUBLICAN TURKISH PARTY (RTP) (CTP) (OZKER OZGUR)

- 2

POPULIST PARTY (PP) (HP) (ALPER ORHON) - 1

INDEPENDENT (ISMET KOTAK) - 1

(DENKTASH, AS PRESIDENT, CANNOT HOLD PARTY OFFICE, BUT IS THE REAL POWER IN THE NUP).

3. THE JUNE, 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS CONFIRMED RAUF DENKTASH'S LEADERSHIP AND THAT OF HIS NUP. (DENKTASH, WITH 76 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RAN WELL  
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AHEAD OF HIS PARTY'S 54 PER CENT; BUT DUE TO COMPLEXITIES IN TFSC ELECTION LAW, NUP OBTAINED 30 OF THE 40 ASSEMBLY SEATS.) DENKTASH HAS BEEN A DOMINANT FIGURE IN THE TURKISH COMMUNITY FOR OVER A DECADE, BUT THE NUP IS FAR FROM BEING AN EXTENSION OF DENKTASH OR A MONOLITH. RATHER, IT IS A LOOSE CONFEDERATION OF INDIVIDUALS, SOME POWERFUL IN THEIR OWN RIGHT AND OTHERS RIDING ON THEIR COATTAILS, WITH PERCEIVED COMMON INTERESTS. ACCORDINGLY THE NUP HAS SUFFERED FROM INTERNAL WEAKNESSES AND HAS TURNED IN A LESS THAN SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, GIVEN ITS PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

4. SOME OF THE MAJOR SOURCES OF STRAIN HAVE BEEN:

A. INABILITY TO DEVELOP CONSISTENT LEGISLATION AND EXECUTE PROGRAMS. ITS OWN LACK OF UNITY HAS RESULTED IN ALMOST FARCIACAL FAILURES TO DELIVER ON NEEDED LEGISLATION, FREQUENT REVISIONS IN LEGISLATION UNDER CONSIDERATION AND, IN ONE CASE (A GENERAL PARDON, THE GOVERNMENT DEFEATING THE LEGISLATION IT DRAFTED WHILE ONLY THE OPPOSITION SUPPORTED IT. THE ALL TOO FREQUENT RESULT HAS BEEN A LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR APPROACH TO MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE TFSC.

B. MUCH OF THE DISSIDENCE WITHIN THE NUP OVER THE PAST YEAR WAS GENERATED BY MEMBERS OF A SO-CALLED "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC" FACTION LED BY ISMET KOTAK, ONE-TIME MINISTER OF HOUSING AND REHABILITATION. ALTHOUGH SUCCESSFUL IN FORCING A CABINET RESHUFFLE IN JULY 1977, THE GROUP (ESTIMATED AT BETWEEN 7-11 DEPUTIES) DID NOT WIN ANY CABINET POSTS. THEY CONTINUED THEIR PRESSURES OVER THE SUMMER. SEVERAL EVENTUALLY RESIGNED CERTAIN OF THEIR POSITIONS WITHIN THE PARTY, BUT ONLY KOTAK HAS SO FAR RESIGNED FROM THE NUP.

C. ANOTHER SOURCE OF DISCONTENT HAS COME FROM THE LABOR WING OF THE PARTY. NUP NOMINATED AS PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES THREE UNION LEADERS OF THE TURK-SEN LABOR FEDERATION IN EXCHANGE FOR TURK-SEN'S SUPPORT IN THE 1976 ELECTIONS. TWO WERE ELECTED. HOWEVER, TURK-SEN BECAME PROGRESSIVELY DISENCHANTED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO DELIVER ON LABOR ISSUES. FACED WITH CHALLENGES TO ITS SUPREMACY IN THE LABOR FIELD FROM NEWLY FORMED, MORE LEFTIST-ORIENTED GROUPS, TURK-SEN FORMALLY BROKE WITH THE NUP IN NOVEMBER 1977. ANOMALOUSLY, ITS TWO ELECTED DEPUTIES HAVE SO FAR REMAINED IN NUP.

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BRURSELS FOR USEEC  
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D. THE NUP SUFFERED ALSO FROM CHARGES OF NEPOTISM WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF DENKTASH'S SON, RAIF (AGE 26) AS PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL. IN AUTUMN 1977 RAIF STEPPED DOWN TO THE POSITION OF DEPUTY SECGEN BUT HAS REMAINED IN THE FOREGROUND AS THE PARTY'S "POINT MAN" IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES. WITH HIS SOMETIMES SHRILL INVECTIVE IN THE ASSEMBLY AND ON THE FRONT PAGE OF ZAMAN NEWSPAPER (WHICH HE OWNS AND EDITS), AND HIS IDEOLOGICAL  
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INFATUATION WITH ALPARSLAN TURKES' MAINLAND NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY, RAIF REMAINS A SOURCE OF DISCONTENT WITHIN THE PARTY, ALTHOUGH NOT THE MAJOR ONE.

5. THE OPPOSITION APPEARS EVEN LESS ORGANIZED. EACH OF THE THREE PARTIES IDENTIFIES ITSELF AS LEFT OF CENTER, AND IN FACT EACH PARTY DOES HAVE MORE OF AN IDEOLOGICAL COMPLEXION THAN DOES THE NUP. HOWEVER, THE PARTIES HAVE LITTLE ABILITY TO ALTER LEGISLATION IN THE ASSEMBLY, AND, WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS NOT SCHEDULED UNTIL 1981, HAVE HAD TO RESORT TO EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY TACTICS TO KEEP THEIR IDEAS AND DESIRES IN THE PUBLIC EYE. ALL THREE PARTIES CONTINUE TO SUFFER ORGANIZATIONAL DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE THEY BASICALLY ARE APPEALING TO THE SAME SLICE OF THE ELECTORATE. THE LIMITED NUMBER OF LEFTIST POLITICAL ACTIVISTS IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY TEND TO DRIFT FROM ONE PARTY TO ANOTHER.

6. THE OPPOSITION LIVES IN THE EXPECTATION THAT BULENT ECEVIT'S ACCESSION TO POWER IN TURKEY WILL ALTER THE ORDER OF THINGS IN THE NORTH. EACH IDENTIFIES TO A GREATER-OR-LESSER DEGREE WITH THE RPP AND EXPECTS TO BE THE PRIME BENEFICIARY FROM THE COMING CHANGES. IN ROUGH ORDER OF CERTAINTY, THEY BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE A SPLIT WITH THE NUP, THAT THE KONUK GOVERNMENT WILL RESIGN, THAT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD WITHIN SIX TO EIGHT MONTHS, AND THAT DENKTASH WILL RESIGN.

7. THE COMMON, BUT ESSENTIALLY UNCOORDINATED, STRATEGY OF THE OPPOSITION HAS BEEN TO CAPITALIZE

ON THE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LAST YEAR TO SHOW  
STRENGTH AT THE POLLS AND TO DEVELOP, NUTURE,  
AND EXPLOIT GENERALIZED PUBLIC DISCONTENT OVER THE  
FAILINGS OF THE DENKTASH/KONUK GOVERNMENT TO COPE  
WITH MANY OF THE PROBLEMS FACING THE TFSC:  
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A. ELECTIONS. THE OPPOSITION HAS ATTEMPTED TO CAST THE  
SEVERAL MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND LOCAL BY-ELECTIONS OVER THE PAST  
YEAR, AS REFERENDA ON THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION. DEVOTING MORE TIME, EFFORT AND PROPAGANDA  
TO THESE EFFORTS THAN HAS NUP, THE OPPOSITION, IN AVGGREGATE,  
HAS WON A SLIGHT MAJORITY OVER THE NUP IN NUMBER OF CONTESTS.  
HOWEVER GIVEN THE ALMOST BLASE APPROACH BY THE NUP TO THE  
ELECTIONS, BOTH IN ITS CAMPAIGNING AND EVALUATION OF THE  
RESULTS, IT IS NOT FAIR TO ASSESS THE RESULTS AS A REPUDIATION  
OF DENKTASH OR EVEN OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE KONUK GOVERNMENT.  
LOCAL ELECTIONS GENERALLY ARE DECIDED ON LOCAL ISSUES AND  
PERSONALITIES, AND AT BEST THE RESULTS CULD BE INTERPRETED  
AS STRAWS IN THE WIND POINTING OUT DEFICIENCIES WITHIN THE  
NUP ORGANIZATION, LACK OF (OR PERHAPS INABILITY TO OBTAIN)  
ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATES, AND A GENERALIZED VOTER DISCONTENT.

B. LABOR AND STUDENT GRIEVANCES. THE OPPOSITION'S  
MAIN EFFORTS IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS HAVE CENTERED ON LABOR  
AND TEACHERS. THE CLP AND RTP HAVE STRONG INFLUENCE WITHIN THE  
LEFTIST DEV-IS LABOR SYNDICATE AND THE RECENTLY FORMED ISEF  
(PROGRESSIVE WORKERS) AMALGAM OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND TEACHERS.  
TURK-SEN UNIONS HAVE ALSO BECOME MORE RESTIVE FOLLOWING TURK-  
SEN'S FORMAL BREAK WITH THE NUP AS WELL AS IN THEIR EFFORTS  
TO PREVENT DEFECTIONS TO DEV-IS. (A ROUND-UP OF THE LABOR  
SITUATION IS BEING REPORTED SEPTTEL). TURKISH CYPRIOT UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS STUDYING IN TURKEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED AGANST UNSUITABLE  
AND OVER-CROWDED TFSC-SUPPORTED STUDENT HOSTELS IN TURKEY,  
INABILITY OF THE ADMINIRATION TO OBTAIN A GREATER ALLOCATION  
FOR TURKISH CYPRIOTS IN THE TURKISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM,  
AND THE AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDEL THEM BY THE  
STATE ONCE ENROLLED IN TURKEY. CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR UNEASE  
HAS BEEN THE FACT THAT TURKISH CYPRIOT STUDENTS AND HOSTELS  
HAVE RECENTLY BEEN DRAWN INTO THE STUDENT VIOLENCE AFFLICING  
TURKISH UNIVERSITIES.

C. THE PRESS. THE OPPOSITION'S PRIME GUARANTEE OF KEEPING  
THEIR POINTS OF VIEW BEFORE THE PUBLIC REMAINS HALKIN SESI,  
THE LARGEST TURKISH CYPRIOT NEWSPAPER. OWNED AND EDITED BY  
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CRUSTY, OLD DR. FAZIL KUCHUK, ONE TIME VICE PRESIDENT OF

CYPRUS, HALKIN SESI REFLECTS THE VOICE OF THE OPPOSITION IN  
IS EDITORIALS AND FEATURE ARTICLES ON A GAMUT OF PUBLIC ISSUES.  
ALTHOUGH DR. KUCHUK OCCASIONALLY FLOATS A TRIAL BALLOON  
ABOUT FORMING A NEW PARTY AND RE-ENTERING POLITICS, FOR THE MOST  
PART HE SEEMS CONTENT TO INVEIGH AGAINST PERCEIVED DENKTASH  
FAILINGS AND GIVE THE OPPOSITION PARTIES MORE-OR-LESS OPEN ACCESS  
TO SOUND OFF OR BUY ADVERTISING IN HALKIN SESI. TO A LESSER  
DEGREE INDEPENDENT LOZKUHT ALSO PROVIDES THEM A SIMILAR OPPORTUNITY.

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-----113817 040701Z /11

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8. DENKTASH REMAINS THE PREEMINENT POLITICAL LEADER IN  
THE NORTH. YET THE PRESENCE OF AN OPPOSITION, ALTHOUGH DIVIDED  
AND WEAK, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL INCLINATIONS OF TURKISH

CYPRIOIS MAKE IT INACCURATE TO DESCRIBE THE POLITICAL SITUATION  
IN THE NORTH AS BEING TOTALLY DOMINATED BY DENKTASH. HE FACES

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REAL CONSTRAINTS ON HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION, ALTHOUGH HE IS ABLE  
TO USE HIS CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL TALENTS FREQUENTLY TO INCREASE  
HIS FLEXIBILITY. WHILE DENKTASH IN THE PAST CONSULTED  
MINIMALLY WITH THE OPPOSITION IN FORMULATING PROPOSALS IN THE  
INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE  
INTENDS TO FOLLOW A MORE OPEN APPROACH IN THE FUTURE. SIMILARLY,  
THE OPPOSITION PARTIES ALL OPPOSE UDI AND ISSUE STATEMENTS  
CRITICAL OF DENKTASH EACH TIME HE  
VOICES PRO-UDI SENTIMENT.  
NEVERTHESS, THE OPPOSITION LEADERS TELL US THAT THEY COULD  
NOT POSSIBLY CAMPAIGN ON ANTI-UDI PLATFORM AS OPPOSITION  
TO IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE POLITICAL APPEAL IF DENKTASH  
CONTINUES TO PUSH THE IDEA.

9. DENKTASH HAS LESS FREEDOM OF ACTION IN DOMESTIC MATTERS  
THAN IN THE INTERCOMMUNAL ISSUE. THE RETURN TO  
POWER OF ECEVIT WILL HAVE REPERCUSSIONS HERE, ALTHOUGH  
PROBABLY NOT AS FAR REACHING AS THE OPPOSITION ANTICIPATES.  
WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER CABINET RESUFFLES AS DENKTASH SEEKS TO  
ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC GRIEVANCES. DENKTASH MAY EVEN ASK KONUK  
TO STEP DOWN; SHOULD THIS HAPPEN IT WOULD BE A CLEAR INDICATION  
THAT DENKTASH SENSES POLITICAL TROUBLE AND THE NEED FOR MORE  
DRASTIC COUNTERMEASURES. ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT  
THAT DENKTASH AND HIS NUP WILL CONTINUE IN POWER UNTIL THE  
SCHEDULED ELECTIONS IN 1981 THERE APPEARS TO BE NO SERIOUS  
THREAT TO HIS RETENTION OF POWER IN THE NEAR AND INTERMEDIATE  
TERM.  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978NICOSI00594  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780099-0003  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** NICOSIA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t197803109/aaaadozc.tel  
**Line Count:** 369  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** f79124b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 7  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 17 may 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3125824  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DENKTASH AND HIS OPPOSITION  
**TAGS:** PGOV, CY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/f79124b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014